

Mentoring Programs

FY 2002 Information and Application Procedures

Application Deadline: July 2, 2002

CFDA #84.184B



Office of Elementary and Secondary Education

Safe and Drug-Free Schools Program

www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/SDFS

OMB #1890-0009 Expiration Date: 7/31/2002

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Introduction

Background

Mentoring is generally defined as a sustained, close, developmental relationship between an older, more experienced individual and a younger person, with the goal of building character and promoting positive, healthy youth development. By being a positive role model, a mentor can help motivate a child to learn and achieve.

There is encouraging evidence that such positive relationships can provide several benefits for youth and have great influence on their lives. In a 1995 study of mentoring, Public/Private Ventures (P/PV) conducted an experimental evaluation of eight mentoring programs. The study considered six areas that mentoring might affect -- social activities, academic performance, attitudes and behavior, relationships with others, self-concept and social/cultural enrichment. P/PV found that mentored youth were less likely to engage in violence and drug use, more likely to attend school and improve academically, and have healthier social relationships (Tierney, Grossman, and Resch, 1995).

While mentoring programs are helping many youth, many more could also benefit from such efforts. This grant program is designed to assist local educational agencies and nonprofit, community-based organizations to promote mentoring programs for children with greatest need that: (1) assist these children in receiving support and guidance from a mentor; (2) improve the academic performance of such children; (3) improve interpersonal relationships between the children and their peers, teachers, other adults, and family members; (4) reduce the dropout rate of such children; and (5) reduce juvenile delinquency and involvement in gangs.

To be eligible for funding, a project must propose mentoring programs and activities to serve children with the greatest need living in rural areas, high-crime areas, troubled home environments, or who attend schools with violence problems. Grant funds must be used for activities that establish or implement a mentoring program, which may include:

1. Hiring of mentoring coordinators and support staff;
2. Providing for the professional development of mentoring coordinators and support staff;
3. Recruitment, screening, and training of mentors;
4. Reimbursement to schools, if appropriate, for the use of school materials or supplies in carrying out the mentoring program;
5. Dissemination of outreach materials; and
6. Evaluation of the mentoring program using scientifically based methods.

The Mentoring Programs grant competition is authorized under Title IV, Part A, Subpart 2, Section 4130 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965, as amended by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001.

The official document governing this grant competition is the notice of final priority, competitive preference priority, definitions, and selection criteria published in the *Federal Register*. This notice is available on the Internet at the following address:
<http://www.ed.gov/legislation/FedRegister>.

Applicable Regulations

The following Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) apply to the grant competition described in this package: 34 CFR Parts 74, 75, 77, 79, 80, 81, 82, 85, 97, 98, and 99.

Government Performance and Results Act

The Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 (GPRA) is a straightforward statute that requires all Federal agencies to manage their activities with attention to the consequences of those activities. Each agency is to clearly state what it intends to accomplish, identify the resources required, and periodically report their progress to the Congress. In so doing, it is expected that the GPRA will contribute to improvements in accountability for the expenditures of public funds, improve Congressional decision-making through more objective information on the effectiveness of Federal programs, and promote a new government focus on results, service delivery, and customer satisfaction.

As required by GPRA, the U.S. Department of Education has prepared a strategic plan for 2002-2007. This plan reflects the Department's priorities and integrates them with its mission and program authorities and describes how the Department will work to improve education for all children and adults in the United States. The Department's goals, as listed in the plan, are:

- Goal 1:** Create a culture of achievement;
- Goal 2:** Improve student achievement;
- Goal 3:** Develop safe schools and strong character;
- Goal 4:** Transform education into an evidence-based field;
- Goal 5:** Enhance the quality and access to postsecondary and adult education; and
- Goal 6:** Establish management excellence.

The Secretary may choose to develop performance indicators for Mentoring Programs in accordance with GPRA. If indicators are developed, grantees will be asked to provide information that relates to participant outcomes and project management.

General Information

Eligibility

Eligible applicants under this grant competition are: (1) local educational agencies (LEAs); (2) nonprofit, community-based organizations (CBOs), which may include faith-based organizations; and (3) a partnership between an LEA and a CBO.

We strongly encourage partnerships between LEAs and CBOs that propose school-based mentoring programs.

Project Period

Projects will be funded for up to 36 months, contingent upon the demonstration of substantial progress each year toward meeting project goals and objectives, and the availability of future funds.

Applicants requesting funding for more than 1 year must submit with the original application ED Form 524 and detailed budget information for each year that the project will be in operation. If you fail to submit a budget request and a budget narrative for each project year, no funding will be awarded for those years.

Estimated Range of Awards

Under this program, an estimated 115 awards will be made ranging from \$100,000 to \$200,000 per project year. *(Please note that the Department of Education is not bound by any estimates contained in this application package).*

We will take into consideration the geographic distribution of grants, including urban and rural areas, in addition to the rank order of applicants. To the extent practicable, we will select not less than one grant recipient from each State for which there is an eligible entity that submits an application of sufficient quality.

Contingent upon the availability of funds, we may make additional awards in Fiscal Year (FY) 2003 from the rank-ordered list of unfunded applications from this competition.

Application Due Date

All applications must be postmarked on or before July 2, 2002. Applications delivered by hand must be received by the U.S. Department of Education Application Control Center no later than 4:30 PM (Washington, DC time) on July 2, 2002.

Under very extraordinary circumstances the Department may change the closing date for a competition. When this occurs, the Secretary announces such a change in a notice published in the *Federal Register*. **Waivers for individual applications failing to meet the deadline will not be granted, regardless of the circumstances.**

Application Requirements

This application package contains all of the information, forms, and instructions needed to apply for this grant. Applications must include the following:

1. A description of the plan for the mentoring program to be carried out;
2. Information on the children expected to be served by the mentoring program;
3. A description of the mechanism that will be used to match children with mentors based on the needs of the children;
4. Information regarding how mentors and children will be recruited to the mentoring program;
5. Information regarding how prospective mentors will be screened;
6. Information on the training that will be provided to mentors; and
7. Information on the system that will be used to manage and monitor information relating to the mentoring program's:
 - (i) Reference checks;
 - (ii) Child and domestic abuse record checks;
 - (iii) Criminal background checks; and
 - (iv) Procedure for matching children with mentors.

We encourage applicants to review *Guidelines for the Screening of Persons Working With Children, the Elderly, and Individuals With Disabilities in Need of Support (Guidelines for Screening)*, developed by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), U.S. Department of Justice. Please see "Appendix A" for more information.

Prohibited Uses of Funds

Grant funds may not be used to (1) directly compensate mentors; (2) obtain educational or other materials or equipment that would otherwise be used in the ordinary course of the grantee's operations; or (3) support litigation of any kind.

Definitions

1. The term “*child with greatest need*” means a child who is at risk of educational failure, dropping out of school, or involvement in criminal or delinquent activities, or who lacks strong positive role models.
2. The term “*mentor*” means a responsible adult, a postsecondary school student, or a secondary school student who works with a child to (a) provide a positive role model for the child; (b) establish a supportive relationship with the child; and (c) provide the child with academic assistance and exposure to new experiences and examples of opportunity that enhance the ability of the child to become a responsible adult.
3. The term “*non-profit*” refers to a school, agency, organization, or institution owned and operated by one or more nonprofit corporations or associations, no part of the net earnings of which inures, or may lawfully inure, to the benefit of any private shareholder or individual.
4. The term “*community-based organization*” means a public or private nonprofit organization of demonstrated effectiveness that is representative of a community or significant segments of a community and provides educational or related services to individuals in the community.
5. The term “*novice applicant*” means any applicant for a grant from the U.S. Department of Education that:
 - (a) Has never received a grant or subgrant under the program from which it seeks funding;
 - (b) Has never been a member of a group application, submitted in accordance with 34 CFR 75.127-75.129, that received a grant under the program from which it seeks funding; and
 - (c) Has not had an active discretionary grant from the Federal Government in the five years before the deadline date for applications under this program (Mentoring Programs). For the purposes of this requirement, a grant is active until the end of the grant’s project or funding period, including any extensions of those periods that extend the grantee’s authority to obligate funds.

In the case of a group application submitted in accordance with 34 CFR 75.127-75.129, to qualify as a novice applicant a group includes only parties that meet the requirements listed above.

General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) Section 427

Section 427 of GEPA affects applicants for new discretionary grant awards under this program. All applicants for new awards must include information in their application to address this provision, summarized below, in order to receive funding under this program.

Section 427 requires each applicant for funds (other than an individual person) to include in its application a description of the steps the applicant proposes to take to ensure equitable access to, and participation in, its federally-assisted program for students, teachers, and other program beneficiaries with special needs.

This section allows applicants discretion in developing the required description. The statute highlights six types of barriers that can impede equitable access or participation that you may address; gender, race, national origin, color, disability, or age. Based on local circumstances, applicants can determine whether these or other barriers may prevent students, teachers, or others from equitable access or participation. The description need not be lengthy; applicants may provide a clear and succinct description of how they plan to address those barriers that are applicable to their circumstances. In addition, the information may be provided in a single narrative, or, if appropriate, may be discussed in connection with related topics in the application.

Note: A general statement of an applicant's nondiscriminatory hiring policy is not sufficient to meet this requirement. Applicants must identify potential barriers and explain steps they will take to overcome these barriers.

Section 427 is not intended to duplicate the requirements of civil rights statutes, but rather to ensure that, in designing their projects, applicants for Federal funds address equity concerns that may affect the ability of certain potential beneficiaries to fully participate in the project and to achieve to high standards. Consistent with program requirements and its approved application, an applicant may use Federal funds awarded to it to eliminate barriers it identifies.

Examples

The following examples help illustrate how an applicant may comply with Section 427:

1. An applicant that proposes to carry out an adult literacy project serving, among others, adults with limited English proficiency, might describe in its application how it intends to distribute a brochure about the proposed project to such potential participants in their native language;
2. An applicant that proposes to develop instructional materials for classroom use might describe how it will make the materials available on audiotape or in Braille for students who are blind;
3. An applicant that proposes to carry out a model science program for secondary students and is concerned that girls may be less likely than boys to enroll in the course might indicate how it tends to conduct "outreach" efforts to girls, to encourage their enrollment.

Priorities and Selection Criteria

Statutory Priority

This grant competition focuses exclusively on projects designed to meet the statutory priority in Title IV, Part A, Subpart 2, section 4130(b)(5)(B) of ESEA, as amended by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001.

To be eligible for funding, a project must propose mentoring programs and activities to serve children with the greatest need living in rural areas, high-crime areas, troubled home environments, or who attend schools with violence problems.

For FY 2002 this priority is an absolute priority. Under 34 CFR 75.105 (c)(3) we consider only applications that meet this priority.

Competitive Preference Priority

Within the statutory priority for this competition for FY 2002, five additional points will be awarded to novice applicants. These points are in addition to any points the application earns under the selection criteria for this program. Please see "Definitions" for an explanation of the term "novice applicant." **If an applicant meets these requirements, Box 6 on ED Form 424 (Application for Federal Education Assistance) must be checked "Yes."**

Statutory Requirements

Projects funded under this program must:

1. Link children with mentors who —
 - (i) Have received training and support in mentoring;
 - (ii) Have been screened using appropriate reference checks, child and domestic abuse record checks, and criminal background checks; and
 - (iii) Are interested in working with children with greatest need;
2. Be designed to achieve one or more of the following goals with respect to children with greatest need:
 - (i) Provide general guidance;
 - (ii) Promote personal and social responsibility;
 - (iii) Increase participation in, and enhance the ability to benefit from, elementary and secondary education;

- (iv) Discourage illegal use of drugs and alcohol, violence, use of dangerous weapons, promiscuous behavior, and other criminal, harmful, or potentially harmful activity;
- (v) Encourage participation in community service and community activities;
- (vi) Encourage the setting of goals and planning for the future, including encouragement of graduation from secondary school and planning for postsecondary education or training;
- (vii) Discourage involvement in gangs.

Assurances

In addition to the standard assurances, applicants must also provide the following assurances:

1. An assurance that no mentor will be assigned to mentor so many children that the assignment will undermine the mentor's ability to be an effective mentor or the mentor's ability to establish a close relationship (a one-to-one relationship, where practicable) with each mentored child;
2. An assurance that the mentoring program will provide children with a variety of experiences and support, including:
 - (i) Emotional support;
 - (ii) Academic assistance; and
 - (iii) Exposure to experiences that the children might not otherwise encounter on their own;
3. An assurance that the mentoring program will be monitored to ensure that each child assigned a mentor benefits from that assignment and that the child will be assigned a new mentor if the relationship between the original mentor and the child is not beneficial to the child;
4. An assurance from each CBO submitting an application that it is eligible under the definitions provided in the *Federal Register* notice and in this application package.

Selection Criteria

The following selection criteria will be used to evaluate applications under this competition. The maximum score for all of these criteria is 100 points. The maximum score for each criterion is indicated in parentheses. The maximum total of points an application may earn is 105 (including the five point competitive preference priority for novice applicants).

1. Need for Project (10 points)

In determining the need for the proposed project, the following factors are considered:

(a) The magnitude of the need for the services to be provided or the activities to be carried out by the proposed project. (10 points)

2. Quality of the Project Design (55 points)

In determining the quality of the design of the proposed project, the following factors are considered:

- (a) The extent to which the goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the proposed project are clearly specified and measurable; (5 points)
- (b) The extent to which parents, teachers, community-based organizations, and the local community have participated, or will participate, in the design and implementation of the proposed mentoring program; (5 points)
- (c) The quality of the system that will be used to manage and monitor mentor reference checks, including appropriate reference checks, child and domestic abuse record checks and criminal background checks; (15 points)
- (d) The quality of the training that will be provided to mentors, including follow-up and support of each match between mentor and child; (10 points)
- (e) The quality of the mechanism that will be used to match children with mentors, based on the needs of the children, and ensure that mentors will develop longstanding relationships with the children they mentor; (5 points)
- (f) The extent to which the proposed project will serve children with the greatest need in the 4th through 8th grades, and continue to serve children from the 9th grade through graduation from secondary school, as needed; (5 points)
- (g) The capability of the applicant to effectively implement its mentoring program; (5 points)
- (h) The resources that will be dedicated to providing children with opportunities for job training or postsecondary education. (5 points)

3. Quality of Project Personnel (20 points)

In determining the quality of project personnel, the following factors are considered:

- (a) The extent to which the applicant encourages applications for employment from persons who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability; (5 points)
- (b) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of key project personnel; (5 points)
- (c) The quality of the plan to recruit mentors. (10 points)

4. Quality of the Project Evaluation (15 points)

In determining the quality of the evaluation, the following factors are considered:

- (a) The extent to which the methods of evaluation are thorough, feasible, and appropriate to the goals, objectives, and outcomes of the proposed project; (10 points)
- (b) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide performance feedback and permit periodic assessment of progress toward achieving intended outcomes. (5 points)

Application Submission

Application Format

All applicants are required to submit one original application (signed in black ink) and three copies (unbound). All pages should have printing on only one side and must be numbered, including any appendices. Do not attach anything to the application that cannot be photocopied using an automatic process, e.g. anything stapled, folded, pasted, or in a size other than 8 1/2 x 11 inches on white paper.

A complete application comprises the following items in the order specified:

1. **ED Form 424.** ED Form 424 must be completed in accordance with the instructions provided.
2. **Project Abstract.** The project abstract should be limited to 200 words, highlighting key points of the proposed project. The abstract should briefly present the project's goals and how the applicant intends to accomplish them. The applicant's name (as shown in item 1 of ED Form 424) and title (as shown in item 13 of the same form) should be clearly marked.
3. **Table of Contents.** The table of contents should identify the page number for each of the major sections of the application, in addition to any appendices.
4. **ED Form 524 and Budget Narrative.** Please follow the instructions contained in ED Form 524 for completing the budget. Please note that the appropriate column on Form 524 must be completed for each year that funds are requested (up to 3 years). Failure to supply a budget and a narrative for each project year will result in no funding for those years.

A detailed budget narrative is also required to explain the information provided in ED Form 524. Using the same budget categories provided on ED Form 524, the narrative should provide sufficient detail for reviewers to easily understand how project costs for each year were determined. Please explain the basis used to calculate indirect cost rates, including evidence of a negotiated indirect cost rate, as well as certain costs for travel, supplies, and contractual, or any other costs that may appear unusual.

Applicants should also budget for the project director and one other staff person to attend an annual 3-day grantee meeting and one other 3-day meeting to be determined by the Department of Education. For planning purposes, applicants may assume these meetings will take place in Washington, DC.

5. **Application Narrative.** Describe your proposed project in detail with particular attention to all selection criteria and statutory requirements, and provide a

description of all aspects of the project. The program narrative section should not exceed 25 double-spaced pages using a standard font no smaller than 12-pt, with 1-inch margins (top, bottom, left, and right). The narrative should be succinct and well organized, following the format and sequence of the selection criteria. If you fail to address all the selection criteria, including each weighted sub-element, our experience suggests your application will not score well enough to be funded.

6. **Assurances, Certifications, and Disclosure.** These forms must be reviewed and signed by the individual identified in item 15 (a) of ED Form 424. Failure to submit the signed assurances, certifications, and disclosure will delay any possible award. The following assurances, certifications, and disclosure forms are included in this application package:
 - **Standard Form 424B** - Assurances – Non-Construction Programs;
 - **ED Form 80-0013** - Certifications Regarding Lobbying; Debarment, Suspension, and Other Responsibility Matters; and Drug-Free Workplace Requirements;
 - **ED Form 80-0014** - Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension, Ineligibility and Voluntary Exclusion – Lower Tier Covered Transactions;
 - **Standard Form LLL** - Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (*note: this form is not required if there are no lobbying activities to disclose*).
7. **Program-specific assurances.** Please see “Assurances” on page 12.
8. **GEPA 427 Statement.** Please see “General Information.”

Submission Guidelines

Applications Sent by Mail: To be considered for funding, applications must postmarked on or before July 2, 2002. Applications postmarked after this date will not be eligible for review. To ensure prompt delivery, please use registered or first-class mail and send to the following address: U.S. Department of Education, Application Control Center, ATTN: CFDA #84.184B, Washington, DC 20202-4725.

One of the following must be shown as proof of mailing:

- (1) A legibly dated U.S. Postal Service Postmark;
- (2) A legible mail receipt with the date of mailing stamped by the U.S. Postal Service;
- (3) A dated shipping label, invoice, or receipt from a commercial carrier; or
- (4) Any other proof of mailing acceptable to the Secretary.

The following are not accepted as proof of mailing:

- (1) A private metered postmark;
- (2) A mail receipt that is not dated by the U.S. Postal Service.

Applicants should note that the U.S. Postal Service does not uniformly provide a dated postmark. Before relying on this method, please check with the local post office.

Applications Delivered by Hand: You or your courier must deliver the original and number of copies specified no later than 4:30 PM (Washington, DC time) on July 2, 2002. Deliveries should be made to the following address: U.S. Department of Education, Application Control Center, ATTN: CFDA #84.184B, 7th and D Streets, SW, ROB-3, Room 3671, Washington, DC 20202-4725.

Hand deliveries will be accepted daily between 8:00 AM and 4:30 PM (Washington, DC time), excluding Saturdays, Sundays, and Federal holidays. Deliveries must be made through the D Street entrance, and entry to the building will require proper photo identification. Please obtain a signed receipt of your delivery.

If you send your application by mail or if you or your courier deliver it by hand, the Application Control Center will mail a Grant Application Receipt Acknowledgement to you. If you fail to receive the notification of application receipt within fifteen (15) days from the closing date call (202) 708-9493. If your application is late, we will notify you that we will not consider the application.

Special Note: Due to recent disruptions to normal mail delivery, the Department encourages applicants to consider using an alternative delivery method (e.g., a commercial courier service such as Federal Express or electronic submission via e-APPLICATION) to transmit applications for this grant competition.

Pilot Project for Electronic Submission of Applications

In FY 2002, the U.S. Department of Education is continuing to expand its pilot project of electronic submission of applications to include additional formula grant programs and additional discretionary grant competitions. Mentoring Programs is one of the programs included in the pilot project and applicants under this grant competition may submit applications in either electronic or paper format.

The pilot project involves the use of the Electronic Grant Application System (e-APPLICATION, formerly e-GAPS) portion of the Grant Administration and Payment System (GAPS). We request your participation in this pilot project. We will continue to evaluate its success and solicit suggestions for improvement.

If you participate in this e-APPLICATION pilot, please note the following:

- Your participation is voluntary;
- You will not receive any additional point value or penalty because you submit a grant application in electronic or paper format;

- You can submit all documents electronically, including the Application for Federal Assistance (ED 424), Budget Information – Non-Construction Programs, (ED 524), and all necessary assurances and certifications;
- Within three working days of submitting your electronic application, fax a signed copy of the Application for Federal Assistance (ED 424) to the Application Control Center after following these steps:
 1. Print ED 424 from the e-APPLICATION system;
 2. Make sure that the institution's Authorized Representative signs this form;
 3. Before faxing this form, submit your electronic via the e-APPLICATION system. You will receive an automatic acknowledgement, which will include a PR/Award number (an identifying number unique to your application);
 4. Place the PR/Award number in the upper right corner of the ED 424;
 5. Fax ED 424 to the Application Control Center at (202) 260-1349;
- We may request that you give us original signatures on all other forms at a later date.

For the electronic grant application for Mentoring Programs and more information on e-APPLICATION, please visit the following address on the Internet: <http://e-grants.ed.gov>.

Electronic Submission

Grant applications submitted through the Internet using the software provided on the e-Grants web site (<http://e-grants.ed.gov>) must be transmitted by 4:30 PM (Washington, DC time) on the deadline date.

The regular hours of operation of the e-Grants web site are 6:00 AM until 12:00 AM (Washington, DC time) Monday through Friday and 6:00 AM until 7:00 PM (Washington, DC time) on Saturday. The system is not available on the second Saturday of every month, Sundays, and Federal holidays. Please note that on Wednesdays the web site is closed for maintenance at 7:00 PM (Washington, DC time).

Note: Applications may be submitted electronically only via the e-APPLICATION system. Applications sent via electronic mail will not be accepted.

Parity Guidelines Between Paper and Electronic Applications

In an effort to ensure parity and a similar look between applications transmitted electronically and applications submitted in conventional paper form, e-APPLICATION has an impact on all applications under this competition.

Users of e-APPLICATION, a data driven system, will be entering data on-line while completing their applications. This will be more interactive than just e-mailing a soft copy

of a grant application to us. If you participate in this voluntary pilot project by submitting an application electronically, the data you enter on-line will go into a database and ultimately will be accessible in electronic form to our reviewers.

This pilot project is another step in the Department's transition to an electronic grant award process. In addition to e-APPLICATION, the Department is conducting a limited pilot of electronic peer review (e-READER) and electronic annual performance reporting (e-REPORTS). To help ensure parity and a similar look between electronic and paper copies of grant applications, each applicant that submits a paper application should adhere to the following guidelines:

- Submit your application on 8½" by 11" paper;
- Leave a one-inch margin on all sides;
- Use consistent font throughout your document. You also may use boldface type, underlining, and italics, however please do not use colored text;
- Please also use black and white for illustrations, including charts, tables, graphs, and pictures;
- For the narrative component, your application should consist of the number and text of each selection criterion followed by the narrative. The text of the selection criterion, if included, does not count against any page limitation;
- Place a page number at the bottom right of each page beginning with 1, and number your pages consecutively throughout your document.

Paperwork Reduction Act

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for the information collection is OMB #1890-0009. The time required to complete the information collection is estimated to average 21 hours per response, including the time to review instructions, search existing data resources, gather and maintain the data needed, and complete and review the information collection.

If you have any comments concerning the accuracy of the time estimate(s) or suggestions for improving this form, please write to: U.S. Department of Education, Washington, DC 20202-4651.

If you have comments or concerns regarding the status of your individual submission of this form, write directly to: U.S. Department of Education, Safe and Drug-Free Schools Program, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW, Room 3E300, Washington, DC 20202-6123.

Other Information

Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs

This program is subject to Executive Order 12372 and the regulations in 34 CFR part 79. One of the objectives of the Executive Order is to foster an intergovernmental partnership and a strengthened federalism. The Executive order relies on processes developed by State and local governments for coordination and review of proposed Federal financial assistance.

Applicants must contact the appropriate State Single Point of Contact to find out about, and to comply with, the State's process under Executive Order 12372. Applicants proposing to perform activities in more than one State should immediately contact the Single Point of Contact for each of those States and follow the procedure established in each State under the Executive order. The name and address of each State Single Point of Contact is listed below. **A copy of the applicant's letter to the State Single Point of Contact must be included with the application.**

In States that have not established a process or chosen a program for review, State, area-wide, regional, and local entities may submit comments directly to the Department.

Any State Process Recommendation and other comments submitted by a State Single Point of Contact and any comments from State, area-wide, regional, and local entities must be received by September 2, 2002, at the following address: The Secretary, EO 12372 – CFDA #84.184B, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW, Room 7W300, Washington, DC 20202-0124. Recommendations or comments may be hand-delivered until 4:30 PM (Washington, DC time) on September 2, 2002. Please do not send applications to this address.

States that are not listed have chosen not to participate in the intergovernmental review process, and therefore do not have a SPOC. If you are located within one of these States, you may still send application material directly to the awarding Federal agency.

State Single Points of Contact

ARKANSAS

Tracy L. Copeland
Manager, State Clearinghouse
Office of Intergovernmental Services
Department of Finance and Administration
1515 W. 7th St., Room 412
Little Rock, Arkansas 72203
Telephone: (501) 682-1074
Fax: (501) 682-5206
tlcopeland@dfa.state.ar.us

CALIFORNIA

Grants Coordination
State Clearinghouse
Office of Planning and Research
P.O. Box 3044, Room 222
Sacramento, California 95812-3044
Telephone: (916) 445-0613
Fax: (916) 323-3018
state.clearinghouse@opr.ca.gov

DELAWARE

Charles H. Hopkins
Executive Department
Office of the Budget
540 S. Dupont Highway, 3rd Floor
Dover, Delaware 19901
Telephone: (302) 739-3323
Fax: (302) 739-5661
chopkins@state.de.us

FLORIDA

Jasmin Raffington
Florida State Clearinghouse
Department of Community Affairs
2555 Shumard Oak Blvd.
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-2100
Telephone: (850) 922-5438
Fax: (850) 414-0479
clearinghouse@dca.state.fl.us

ILLINOIS

Virginia Bova
Department of Commerce
and Community Affairs
James R. Thompson Center
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ED Internet Home Page
OCFO Web Page Internet

<http://ed.gov>
<http://ed.gov/offices/OCFO/grants>

SEC. 4130. MENTORING PROGRAMS

(a) PURPOSE; DEFINITIONS-

(1) **PURPOSE-** The purpose of this section is to make assistance available to promote mentoring programs for children with greatest need —

- (A) to assist such children in receiving support and guidance from a mentor;
- (B) to improve the academic achievement of such children;
- (C) to improve interpersonal relationships between such children and their peers, teachers, other adults, and family members;
- (D) to reduce the dropout rate of such children; and
- (E) to reduce juvenile delinquency and involvement in gangs by such children.

(2) **DEFINITIONS-** In this part:

(A) **CHILD WITH GREATEST NEED-** The term 'child with greatest need' means a child who is at risk of educational failure, dropping out of school, or involvement in criminal or delinquent activities, or who lacks strong positive role models.

(B) **ELIGIBLE ENTITY-** The term 'eligible entity' means —

- (i) a local educational agency;
- (ii) a nonprofit, community-based organization; or
- (iii) a partnership between a local educational agency and a nonprofit, community-based organization.

(C) **MENTOR-** The term 'mentor' means a responsible adult, a postsecondary school student, or a secondary school student who works with a child —

- (i) to provide a positive role model for the child;
- (ii) to establish a supportive relationship with the child; and
- (iii) to provide the child with academic assistance and exposure to new experiences and examples of opportunity that enhance the ability of the child to become a responsible adult.

(D) **STATE-** The term 'State' means each of the several States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the United States Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

(b) GRANT PROGRAM-

(1) **IN GENERAL-** The Secretary may award grants from funds made available to carry out this subpart under section 4003(2) to eligible entities to assist such entities in establishing and supporting mentoring programs and activities for children with greatest need that —

(A) are designed to link such children (particularly children living in rural areas, high-crime areas, or troubled home environments, or children experiencing educational failure) with mentors who —

- (i) have received training and support in mentoring;
- (ii) have been screened using appropriate reference checks, child and domestic abuse record checks, and criminal background checks; and
- (iii) are interested in working with children with greatest need; and

(B) are intended to achieve one or more of the following goals with respect to children with greatest need:

- (i) Provide general guidance.
- (ii) Promote personal and social responsibility.

- (iii) Increase participation in, and enhance the ability to benefit from, elementary and secondary education.
- (iv) Discourage illegal use of drugs and alcohol, violence, use of dangerous weapons, promiscuous behavior, and other criminal, harmful, or potentially harmful activity.
- (v) Encourage participation in community service and community activities.
- (vi) Encourage setting goals and planning for the future, including encouragement of graduation from secondary school and planning for postsecondary education or training.
- (viii) Discourage involvement in gangs.

(2) USE OF FUNDS-

(A) IN GENERAL- Each eligible entity awarded a grant under this subsection shall use the grant funds for activities that establish or implement a mentoring program, that may include —

- (i) hiring of mentoring coordinators and support staff;
- (ii) providing for the professional development of mentoring coordinators and support staff;
- (iii) recruitment, screening, and training of mentors;
- (iv) reimbursement to schools, if appropriate, for the use of school materials or supplies in carrying out the mentoring program;
- (v) dissemination of outreach materials;
- (vi) evaluation of the mentoring program using scientifically based methods; and
- (vii) such other activities as the Secretary may reasonably prescribe by rule.

(B) PROHIBITED USES- Notwithstanding subparagraph (A), an eligible entity awarded a grant under this section may not use the grant funds —

- (i) to directly compensate mentors;
- (ii) to obtain educational or other materials or equipment that would otherwise be used in the ordinary course of the eligible entity's operations;
- (iii) to support litigation of any kind; or
- (iv) for any other purpose reasonably prohibited by the Secretary by rule.

(3) AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS- Funds made available through a grant under this section shall be available for obligation for a period not to exceed 3 years.

(4) APPLICATION- Each eligible entity seeking a grant under this section shall submit to the Secretary an application that includes —

- (A) a description of the plan for the mentoring program the eligible entity proposes to carry out with such grant;
- (B) information on the children expected to be served by the mentoring program for which such grant is sought;
- (C) a description of the mechanism the eligible entity will use to match children with mentors based on the needs of the children;
- (D) an assurance that no mentor will be assigned to mentor so many children that the assignment will undermine the mentor's ability to be an effective mentor or the mentor's ability to establish a close relationship (a one-to-one relationship, where practicable) with each mentored child;
- (E) an assurance that the mentoring program will provide children with a variety of experiences and support, including —

- (i) emotional support;
 - (ii) academic assistance; and
 - (iii) exposure to experiences that the children might not otherwise encounter on their own;
- (F) an assurance that the mentoring program will be monitored to ensure that each child assigned a mentor benefits from that assignment and that the child will be assigned a new mentor if the relationship between the original mentor and the child is not beneficial to the child;
- (G) information regarding how mentors and children will be recruited to the mentoring program;
- (H) information regarding how prospective mentors will be screened;
- (I) information on the training that will be provided to mentors; and
- (J) information on the system that the eligible entity will use to manage and monitor information relating to the mentoring program's —
- (i) reference checks;
 - (ii) child and domestic abuse record checks;
 - (iii) criminal background checks; and
 - (iv) procedure for matching children with mentors.

(5) SELECTION-

(A) **COMPETITIVE BASIS-** In accordance with this subsection, the Secretary shall award grants to eligible entities on a competitive basis.

(B) **PRIORITY-** In awarding grants under subparagraph (A), the Secretary shall give priority to each eligible entity that —

- (i) serves children with greatest need living in rural areas, high-crime areas, or troubled home environments, or who attend schools with violence problems;
- (ii) provides high quality background screening of mentors, training of mentors, and technical assistance in carrying out mentoring programs; or
- (iii) proposes a school-based mentoring program.

(C) **OTHER CONSIDERATIONS-** In awarding grants under subparagraph (A), the Secretary shall also consider —

- (i) the degree to which the location of the mentoring program proposed by each eligible entity contributes to a fair distribution of mentoring programs with respect to urban and rural locations;
- (ii) the quality of the mentoring program proposed by each eligible entity, including —
 - (I) the resources, if any, the eligible entity will dedicate to providing children with opportunities for job training or postsecondary education;
 - (II) the degree to which parents, teachers, community-based organizations, and the local community have participated, or will participate, in the design and implementation of the proposed mentoring program;
 - (III) the degree to which the eligible entity can ensure that mentors will develop longstanding relationships with the children they mentor;
 - (IV) the degree to which the mentoring program will serve children with greatest need in the 4th through 8th grades; and
 - (V) the degree to which the mentoring program will continue to serve children from the 9th grade through graduation from secondary school, as needed; and

(iii) the capability of each eligible entity to effectively implement its mentoring program.

(D) GRANT TO EACH STATE- Notwithstanding any other provision of this subsection, in awarding grants under subparagraph (A), the Secretary shall select not less than one grant recipient from each State for which there is an eligible entity that submits an application of sufficient quality pursuant to paragraph (4).

(6) MODEL SCREENING GUIDELINES-

(A) IN GENERAL- Based on model screening guidelines developed by the Office of Juvenile Programs of the Department of Justice, the Secretary shall develop and distribute to each eligible entity awarded a grant under this section specific model guidelines for the screening of mentors who seek to participate in mentoring programs assisted under this section.

(B) BACKGROUND CHECKS- The guidelines developed under this subsection shall include, at a minimum, a requirement that potential mentors be subject to reference checks, child and domestic abuse record checks, and criminal background checks.

Appendix A

The following information is excerpted from *Guidelines for the Screening of Persons Working With Children, the Elderly, and Individuals With Disabilities in Need of Support (Guidelines for Screening)*, developed by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), U.S. Department of Justice. This publication offers practical steps that schools, communities, and other service organizations can take to assess their screening needs and to determine whom to screen and how.

Please note that this information is included only to provide suggestions to applicants. The full document can be downloaded at the following address on the Internet: <http://www.ncjrs.org/pdffiles/167248.pdf> (you will need Adobe Acrobat Reader to download this file).

Screening Practices

Typically, when background "screening" is discussed, the focus is on the use of information from criminal history records (e.g., FBI fingerprint checks). It is important to recognize, however, that many other practices can weed out potentially abusive workers and volunteers. These range from standard interviewing and reference checking to more complex and controversial procedures such as screening against child abuse, reviewing dependent adult abuse and sex offender registries, psychological testing, drug testing, and home visits. (Not all of these practices can be undertaken in all States, however. The discussion of the legal framework below provides additional information on these practices.)

Consideration of the following screening methods is incorporated into the guidelines, particularly in discussion of the decision-making model: (1) practices that can be considered basic screening, (2) more extensive background checks that are frequently used (e.g., criminal history checks), and (3) special methods that are used infrequently or for special types of workers only. Information about the practices currently being used is primarily limited to those used by organizations and agencies serving children and youth. A study funded by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), *Effective Screening of Child Care and Youth Service Workers*,¹ surveyed approximately 3,800 child- and youth-serving organizations and agencies nationwide on the screening mechanisms they used (the study explored cost, timeliness of information, quality, and perceived effectiveness). The study's findings indicated some differences in the practices used to screen employees and those used to screen volunteers:

- **For potential employees:**

- Almost all conducted what can be called basic screening of potential employees: personal interviews (98 percent); reference checks with past employers (93 percent); personal reference checks (86 percent); confirmation of educational status (80 percent); and observation of the applicant in the job position (70 percent).
- Overall, 60 percent conducted at least one type of criminal record check on employee applicants; State and local checks were used more often than FBI checks. This figure reflects a range -- almost all juvenile detention/corrections facilities (94 percent) conducted criminal record checks on employees, compared with only 43 percent of private schools and 50 percent of youth development organizations.
- Fewer than 10 percent used psychological testing, home visits, mental illness/psychiatric history checks, alcohol or drug testing, or State sex offender registry checks on employees. (However, 86 percent of foster care agencies reported conducting home visits of prospective foster care and adoptive homes.)
- **For potential volunteers:**
 - To screen volunteers, 76 percent of the respondents used personal interviews and 54 percent used personal reference checks.
 - More than one-third (35 percent) conducted at least one type of criminal record check on volunteer applicants; State and local checks were used more often than FBI checks. Again, this figure reflects a range. Most juvenile detention/corrections facilities (83 percent) conducted criminal record checks on volunteers, compared with only 12 percent of private schools, 23 percent of public school districts, and 28 percent of hospitals.
 - No more than 6 percent used psychological testing, home visits, mental illness/psychiatric history checks, alcohol or drug testing, or State sex offender registry checks to screen volunteers.

Some Types of Background Screening Mechanisms

Basic Screening Practices

- Employment reference checks.
- Personal reference checks.
- Personal interviews.
- Confirmation of education.

- Written application.
- On-the-job observation.

Frequently Used Practices

- Local criminal record check.
- State criminal record check.
- FBI criminal record check.
- State central child/dependent adult abuse registry check.
- State sex offender registry check.
- Nurse's aide registry record check.
- Motor vehicle record check.
- Professional disciplinary board background check.

Infrequently Used Practices

- Alcohol/drug testing.
- Psychological testing.
- Mental illness/psychiatric history check.
- Home visits.

Guidelines for Organizations Developing Screening Policies

Levels of Screening

Organizations providing care or services to children, the elderly, and individuals with disabilities should adopt a screening policy. The three-part decision-making model discussed later in this report is a useful guide for organizations in developing such a policy.

Issues appropriate for a screening policy include:

- Statements on minimum required screening standards.
- Guidelines on when more extensive screening practices should be used.
- Provisional hiring policies.
- Guidelines on how to assess background screening information once it is received.
- Maintenance and dissemination of background screening records.
- Standards for working with vulnerable populations.

Applicants should be advised of the organization's screening policy. Reviewing this policy annually -- and as new information on available mechanisms arises -- is also appropriate. All applicants who are seeking a position to work or volunteer with children, the elderly, or individuals with disabilities should be screened at a basic level. Basic screening includes:

- A comprehensive application form with a signed statement.
- A thorough personal interview that examines an applicant's past employment or volunteer experience and explores other indicators of potential problem behavior.
- Reference checks with past employers (or appropriate reference checks for volunteers and young adults) and personal contacts.

Each applicant's references should be checked completely. In addition, a confirmation of education status may be appropriate.

Additional screening practices may also be warranted. Thorough consideration of all relevant factors will assist an organization in determining whether additional screening is warranted for some or all of its workers. The decision-making model can guide organizations in making this determination. Organizations using additional screening mechanisms (e.g., personality or psychological testing, criminal records checks) are advised to do so in conjunction with basic screening practices and with a full understanding of the limitations of each of the screening practices used.

Results of Screening

Once screening information is received, it is important to have strategies for dealing with the information, especially when the screening process has yielded questions about the applicant. An organization's strategies for dealing with screening results should be set forth clearly in written policies.

To the extent possible, the hiring or placement of an applicant should be delayed until the screening process is completed. If this is not possible, the applicant, pending completion of the screening process, should be restricted to supervised situations or situations in which one other worker is present. The applicant should never be alone with vulnerable individuals. In addition, the organization is advised to retain the right to terminate the worker or volunteer if the screening yields adverse information or reveals that incorrect information was provided by the applicant. As a minimum standard, automatic disqualification of a potential worker or volunteer is appropriate when the screening results indicate that the individual, as an adult, perpetrated any crime involving a child or a dependent adult, regardless of how long ago the incident occurred, or any violent crime within the past 10 years.

It is recommended that disqualification for all other crimes and/or questionable behavior be discretionary, with incidents evaluated on the basis of consultation with appropriate professionals and the following factors:

- The relationship between the incident and the type of employment or service that the applicant will provide.

- The applicant's employment or volunteer history before and after the incident.
- The applicant's efforts and success at rehabilitation.
- The likelihood that the incident would prevent the applicant from performing his or her responsibilities in a manner consistent with the safety and welfare of the consumers served by the agency.
- The circumstances and/or factors indicating the incident is likely to be repeated.
- The nature, severity, number, and consequences of the incidents disclosed.
- The circumstances surrounding each incident, including contributing societal or environmental conditions.
- The age of the individual at the time of the incident.
- The amount of time elapsed since the incident occurred.

Decision-making Model

The number of persons who may have contact with children and vulnerable adults is extensive. Countless different professions and types of organizations serve these populations. Given the need to protect children and vulnerable adults from abuse in a variety of settings and the significant differences in organizational purpose, staffing needs, and available resources, these guidelines present a decision-making model rather than a list of screening practices to be used in every circumstance. The model poses questions to ask when deciding which background screening practices to utilize. The model assumes that screening for any position will include at least a written application with a signed statement, professional and personal reference checks, and an interview. Supplemental screening measures may also be warranted.

The decision-making model provides a framework for analyzing when to conduct supplemental screening practices. As a framework to assist States, organizations, and others in developing screening policies, the model reflects the desire of Congress to encourage screening practices while maintaining deference to the States on this issue.¹⁹ The decision-making model is designed to facilitate a serious, careful examination focusing on opportunities for harm. This model is not the only set of steps that could be developed. States, coalitions, associations, and organizations are encouraged to develop screening practices for use in particular settings. Screening for specific settings and types of workers (employees or volunteers) could also incorporate evaluations of competence for particular tasks; however, this model does not directly address competence goals. Further, screening must be placed in context. It is one tool aimed at preventing harm. Others include education (of staff and volunteers, parents and guardians, children and vulnerable adults) and abuse prevention policies (discouraging opportunities for abuse and encouraging children and vulnerable adults to voice concerns about inappropriate behavior).

Preparation Steps Before Using the Model

Review tasks and positions

Reviewing the types of positions in the organization and the general tasks and characteristics of each is useful before beginning to assess the screening required for a particular type of position. Screening to prevent harm should supplement selection procedures aimed at evaluating the qualifications of an applicant for a particular task or job. This decision-making model focuses on the former.

Review harms

Before beginning to use the model, it is also useful to ask: What are the harms that are being screened against? Physical, sexual, and emotional abuse? Theft and other property offenses? Arson, assault, or murder? A clear understanding of the specific potential for harm associated with particular positions will help to focus the discussion of screening issues. For example, concerns about theft may be especially important for certain programs serving the elderly.

The Model

Step 1: Assessment of triggers

The screening decision-making model includes three major steps. The first step requires an assessment of the presence and degree of screening "triggers." These triggers can be divided into three categories -- those involving the setting, those pertaining to the worker's contact with the adult or child, and special considerations.

Setting considerations:

- Will others (adults or children) be present during the contact (the opportunity for abuse is increased if no one else is present)?
- Who are those other people (the opportunity for abuse may still be exceptionally high if young children or certain vulnerable adults are the only others present)?
- Will the worker be closely monitored and supervised?
- What is the precise nature of the worker's involvement with the organization and with the client population (whether the worker is an employee or volunteer may be part of this assessment)?
- What is the physical location of the contact (e.g., in a classroom, a camp, anywhere -- care should be taken in considering all activities and their different physical locations, including transportation to and from events)?

Contact considerations:

- The duration of the contact (how much time is spent with the client per occasion).
- The frequency of the contact and the length of the relationship (e.g., one-time only, once a week for a year).
- The type of contact (e.g., does the worker have direct contact with children or vulnerable adults or does he or she have administrative or other duties that

support the activities of the organization? With the latter, is there in fact one-on-one contact?).

Special considerations:

Are there special circumstances that should be factored into the screening decision? At this point, an examination of the vulnerability of the individuals served is important. Those whose ability to communicate is impaired because of age, infirmity, life history, or other reasons may be exceptionally vulnerable to abuse. For example, children with certain learning disabilities or those with a history of abuse or neglect may fall into this category. There may also be State laws or regulations that require certain screening practices to be used, triggering the use of a certain screening method. For example, States may require that State or Federal criminal record checks be done. If a State license or certification is required, statutory or regulatory requirements may also be in place.

Step 2: Evaluation of Intervenorors to Decision-making

With the triggers in mind, consideration moves to the second step of evaluating "intervenorors," or items that may limit or affect the screening decision:

- **Unavailable or inaccessible information.** Certain screening mechanisms may not be available. For example, a number of States simply do not authorize criminal record checks for a number of types of persons serving children, the elderly, or individuals with disabilities.
- **Unexpected absences or departures.** An immediate need for staff may also "intervene" in the screening decision-making process.³
- **Liability concerns.** The risk of liability may affect screening decisions. Federal, State, or local laws may give applicants and employees certain legal rights. For example, certain questions may not be asked during an interview/application process, and generally all inquiries must be relevant to the task or position at hand. Liability concerns could also stem from negligent hiring torts; organizations have been sued when a client was injured by an employee or volunteer they selected.
- **Presence of other risk-reduction measures.** A consideration of other risk-reduction measures in place is helpful in evaluating the need for specific screening practices. However, risk-reduction measures as intervenorors do not necessarily obviate the need for supplemental screening. Rather, their presence is a pragmatic consideration in evaluating the screening practices used. Risk-reduction measures may include training programs or levels of supervision.
- **Financial or human resources.** The practical impact that financial and human resources may have on screening is also a factor to be considered.

Step 3: Analysis and Selection of Screening Practices

The third step puts information gleaned from steps 1 and 2 together with various screening options. The model assumes that, based on this information, supplemental screening practices may be warranted. The advantages and disadvantages of each screening practice should be reviewed at this time.

As the extent and number of triggers increase, supplemental screening measures are appropriate. For example, circumstances in which repeated one-on-one contact occurs between one worker and one child or dependent adult, often in very private surroundings, will merit supplemental screening practices. Supplemental screening practices might include the following:

- Confirmation of a person's educational status (this may be particularly appropriate for young workers for whom a professional reference may not be available or for situations in which the educational degree is relevant to the task to be performed by the applicant).
- Motor vehicle record check.
- Local, State, or FBI criminal record check.
- Check of the central child or dependent adult abuse registries.
- Sex offender registry check.
- Home visits.
- Psychological testing.
- Alcohol or drug testing.
- Psychiatric history check.

Some Suggestions for Implementing Screening in the Organization

Although it may seem simple to endorse the concept of performing careful worker screening prior to hiring the worker, in practice there are many details to consider. This section sets forth a series of steps for an organization to consider in implementing screening practices. This does not establish a standard of practice, nor is it the only set of steps for screening that can be developed. Rather, these suggestions are intended to further the dialog on screening in a concrete and practical way. Thus, organizations are encouraged to consider these (and other) ideas in developing screening practices and comprehensive abuse prevention measures. In addition, States, coalitions, and associations whose members serve the many discrete types of persons working (or volunteering) with vulnerable populations are encouraged to develop screening practices or policies aimed at those particular settings.

- Designate a person(s) within the organization who is responsible for receiving, reviewing, and acting on background screening information. Typically, an individual in the human resources or personnel department has responsibility for receipt and review of background screening information. This person should thoroughly understand all staff positions and roles so as to adequately assess the relevance of background information obtained. This person would also be responsible for developing and adhering to a screening/hiring policy based on the three-step decision-making model discussed in the body of this report. Making one person responsible for overseeing the process ensures that a consistent approach is taken, the screening policy is used appropriately, and the confidentiality of employee/volunteer records is maintained. In smaller settings, the director or assistant director should assume the centralized role of "keeper" of confidential worker information.
- Develop a comprehensive written application form that informs applicants of the organization's screening policies and facilitates the ensuing background screening process. Matters to consider in the initial application process include:
 - An explanation of the hiring/selection process, including a written release giving consent to verify the information provided on the application (signed by the applicant) and to search criminal history and registry records (and conduct other checks), if appropriate.
 - An application form that includes a signed statement verifying the applicant's understanding that falsifying information is grounds for dismissal and/or other action.
- Conduct personal interviews that probe for more in-depth information that may not be available through other screening mechanisms. Interview questions should be tailored to the needs of the setting and the role of the worker or volunteer.

A standardized interview process would promote consistency among applicant interviews and help eliminate subjectivity associated with using multiple interviewers. Training on effective interview techniques, especially when delving into sensitive topic areas, would be of assistance. If possible, use of a team approach would increase objectivity, obtain different perspectives, and promote adequate documentation. Follow-up interviews may be needed as information surfaces through other background screening practices.

- Conduct reference checks (and, if appropriate, educational status checks).
 - When asking applicants for references, a verbal or written statement that references will be checked may deter unsuitable applicants and reduce fabrication.
 - Centralizing the reference-checking process and providing training would permit responsible staff to become persistent and deft in their inquiries. Fear of defamation or other lawsuits may limit the amount or detail of information a reference is initially willing to supply. Obtaining an applicant's written consent allowing for the release of information by previous employers may make for more effective reference checks. Some agencies

ask references whether they know of any reason why the person should not be hired to work with the particular consumer population.

- Draft organizational policies on the appropriate use of criminal history information or other registry information to the extent this information is available, and develop specific criteria for using this information for screening purposes.

1. ABA Center on Children and the Law, Washington, DC, 1995 (study funded by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, U.S. Department of Justice, 92-MC-CX-0013).

2. Although this decision-making model was drafted for States, organizations, and others, some language may pertain to organizations only.

3. To reduce the utilization of unscreened individuals in emergency situations, childcare centers and others that frequently have unexpected personnel departures may form relationships with umbrella organizations or private groups to maintain a roster of screened individuals who can provide personnel support. A screened staff person may also be designated as a "floater" to fill in as needed.

Appendix B
